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Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
----------087191 112304Z /62
O R 102241Z NOV 77
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7264
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMCONSUL BELIZE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 4540

NODIS

FOR HABIB FROM YOUNG

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, UNGA, BH, UK, GT
SUBJECT: YOUNG/PRICE CONVERSATION ON UK-GUATEMALA DISPUTE
OVER BELIZE

MEMCON YOUNG/PRICE TALKS NOVEMBER 10 ON GUATEMALAN
TERRITORIAL CLAIMS AGAINST BELIZE REPORTED BELOW:

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
PARTICIPANTS:
PREMIER GEORGE PRICE, BELIZE
MINISTER OF STATE ASSAD SHOMAN, BELIZE
AMBASSADOR ANDREW YOUNG, USUN
CHARLES M. HANSON, JR. USUN
DATE AND PLACE: NOVEMBER 10, 1977, AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S OFFICE

MR. PRICE SAID HE WOULD COME "RIGHT TO THE POINT." HE
DESCRIBED HIS RECENT VISITS TO LONDON AND PANAMA AND TALKS
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WITH BRITISH AND PANAMANIAN OFFICIALS.
HE SAID THE BRITISH HAD INFORMED HIM THAT THEY FELT THEY
HAD TO CONSIDER TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS. HE, HOWEVER,
REMAINS ABSOLUTELY OPPOSED TO GIVING UP ONE INCH OF
BELIZEAN TERRITORY. WHEN THE BRITISH ASKED HIM WHAT
HE PROPOED TO DO, HE LISTED FOUR POSSIBILITIES:

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1. PANAMANIAN ASSISTANCE:
OMAR TORRIJOS THOUGHT HE COULD BRING ABOUT A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION "WITHIN TWELVE MONTHS." HE PROPOSED TO APPOINT A FACT-FINDING COMMITTEE INCLUDING PANAMANIANN, JAMAICAN, AND BELIZEAN REPRESENTATIVES. TORRIJOS FEELS THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR A SOLUTION WILL IMPROVE AFTER THE UPCOMING GUATEMALAN ELECTIONS AND TORRIJOS HAS CONTACTS WITH BOTH OF THE POSSIBLE WINNERS;
2. MEXICAN ASSISTANCE:
MEXICAN MINISTER ROEL HAS OFFERED TO BE HELPFUL. HOWEVER, ROEL CAUTIONS AGAINST TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS ON THE PART OF BELIZE SINCE A CONCESSION TO GUATEMALA WOULD REVIVE MEXICAN CLAIMS TO BELIZE TERRITORY;
3. US ASSISTANCE:
PREMIER PRICE URGED AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND THE US GOVERNMENT TO PRESS GUATEMALA TO GIVE UP ITS IMPOSSIBLE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS AGAINST BELIZE;
4. STATUS QUO:
FAILING ALL OF THE ABOVE THREE POSSIBILITIES, PRICE SAID THAT HE COULD ONLY SEE CONTINUING IN THE PRESENT STATUS FOR SOME TIME.

PRICE CONTINUED THAT TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS WOULD SET AN EXTREMELY BAD PRECEDENT FOR LATIN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD SINCE HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE ARE AT PRESENT AT LEAST 42 TERRITORIAL DISPUTES IN LATIN AMERICA.
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(AFTER SOME DISCUSSION, HE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THIS FIGURE INCLUDED TERRITORIAL DISPUTES IN OTHER AREAS OF THE WORLD AS WELL.)
HE MENTIONED VENEZUELA AND GUYANA; SRUINAM AND GUYANA; BOLIVIA, ETC. ETC.

PREMIER PRICE DELIVERED A PERSONAL NOTE TO AMBASSADOR YOUNG FROM OMAR TORRIJOS.
RESPONDING, AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAID THAT THE US GOVERNMENT TENDED TOWARD THE VIEW THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH A SOLUTION TO THE BELIEZE-UK-GUATEMALA DISPUTE WITH SOME TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS. IT SEEMED TO HIM ALSO THAT THE LATEST PROPOSALS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE BRITISH, INVOLVING ONLY SOME HUNDREDS OF SQUARE MILES OF TERRITORY--"MOSTLY SWAMP"--SOUTH OF MOHO, AND ABOUT 1,000 PEOPLE, WERE APPARENTLY BETTER THAN PROPOSALS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED, SOME OF WHICH WENT SO FAR AS TO INCLUDE THE AREA SOUTH OF THE MONKEY RIVER.

THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE UNDERSTOOD FURTHER THAT PROSPECTS FOR A SOLUTION TO THE DISPUTE NOW ARE CONSIDERABLY BETTER THAN THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE LATER ON. IF RIVAL GUATEMALAN GENERALS

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RESORTED TO THE JINGOISTIC RHETORIC AND THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN
HEATED UP, IT WAS POSSIBLE, ACCORDING TO PRES. ODUBER OF
COSTA RICA, TO FORESEE A SITUATION WHERE CUBA
COULD BECOME INVOLVED ON THE SIDE OF BELIZE, WHICH
COULD LEAD TO NICARAGUAN INVOLVEMENT ON THE SIDE OF
GUATEMALA--A MOST UNDERSIRABLE PROSPECT. THE AMBASSADOR
CONTINUED THAT WHILE IN HIS VIEW TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS
RARELY SOLVE ANYTHING, IT WAS CERTAINLY A FACT THAT THE
LONG-STANDING DISPUTE IS AN ANNOYANCE THAT MUST BE
GOTTEN RID OF.
NOTE: UPGRADED TO NODIS PER MR. HART S/S-O

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USUN 4540

NODIS

FOR HABIB FROM YOUNG

THE AMBASSADOR ASKED PRICE WHAT HE CONSIDERED TO BE THE
LATEST ATTITUDE OF OAS TOWARD THE DISPUTE. PRICE REPLIED
THAT PREVIOUSLY THE OAS HAS TENDED TO SIDE WITH GUATEMALA
AGAINST "OUTSIDER" UK OVER THE QUESTION OF BELIZE AS A
COLONY OF THE UK. HOWEVER, AT THE LAST MEETING IN GRENADA
OAS SENTIMENT HAD SHIFTED IN BELIZE'S FAVOR. AMBASSADOR YOUNG
SAID THAT SENTIMENT AT THE UN WAS ALSO LIKELY TO BE HIGHLY
FAVORABLE TO BELIZE, BUT MENTIONED THAT THE US WOULD
PROBABLY ABSTAIN IN THE VOTING SINCE, AS LONG AS THE
POSSIBILITY EXISTED OF OUR PLAYING A HELPFUL PART IN
FINDING A SOLUTION, HE FELT WE HAD TO AVOID THE APPEARANCE
OF TAKING SIDES ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

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AMBASSADOR YOUNG INFORMED THE PREMIER THAT SECRETARY VANCE WOULD BE PLEASED TO MEET WITH HIM AT 11:30 ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12 IN WASHINGTON. THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT PRICE MIGHT WANT TO MEET ALSO WITH DANTE FASCELL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, TERRY TODMAN--ARA, AND PHILIP HABIB--
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UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE, IF THESE CONTACTS COULD BE ARRANGED.

PRINCE EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT THAT THE US INTENDED TO ABSTAIN,, AND ASKED AMBASSADOR YOUNG TO PUT BELIZE'S CASE BEFORE PRESIDENT CARTER IN AN APPEAL TO GET HELP FOR BELIZE. HE PRIMISED TO REDOUBLE BELIZE'S EFFORT TO ASSIST THE US IN ANY WAY WITH THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY.

RETURNING TO TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS, PRICE SAID THAT HE HAD RECENTLY VISITED THE TERRITORY INVOLVED, INCLUDING THE AMAYA KICHE COMMUNITY. MORE THAN 2,000 PEOPLE LIVE IN THE AREA, SOME OF WHOM HAD FLED THERE FROM GUATEMALA. THERE WAS NO HOPE FOR THEM UNDER GUATEMALAN RULE. PRICE SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT GUATEMALA WILL BE "SPONSORING" TWO "MERCENARIES" TO APPEAR BEFORE THE FOURTH COMMITTEE DURING ITS DELIBERATIONS. PRICE HIMSELF WILL ADDRESS THE FOURTH COMMITTEE ON NOVEMBER 11. HE SAID THAT SACRIFICING 400-SQUARE MILES OF BELIZEAN TERRITORY AND 2,000 UNWILLING BELIZEANS TO GUATEMALA WOULD SURELY MEAN THE END OF HIS POLITICAL LIFE. THEREFORE, IF ALL ELSE FAILS, HE WILL RELUCTANTLY PRESS FOR CONTINUATION OF THE STATUS QUO.
YOUNG

NOTE: UPGRADED TO NODIS PER MR. HART S/S-O

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